

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

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In Reply Refer To: 122

April 24, 2001

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LETTER

TARGETED SOLICITATION FOR PROPOSALS
EFFICIENCIES IN UPPER AND LOWER PROSTHETIC LIMBS AND
COMPONENTS

1. This Information Letter announces the opportunity for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities to submit proposals designed to study functional outcomes and comparisons of upper or lower limb prosthetic systems and individual components.
2. **Background:** New design developments in prosthetics, especially those utilizing computer componentry, have resulted in potentially more “state of the art” artificial limbs. The appropriate prescription of such limbs relies on dependable data regarding users, the level of their amputation, and impact of artificial limb on gait and overall functional outcomes.
3. Proposals that seek to establish data driven, evidence-based guidelines for prosthetic prescription are invited from eligible VA clinicians (5/8th time). Studies may be for up to **two years** and can be funded for up to a **total of \$100,000** over those two years. Studies should fall in one of the following lines of investigation:
 - a. Gather data concerning gait quality, speed, energy consumption, quality of life, pain, and community, recreational, and work access or;
 - b. Demonstrate gait efficiencies realized through the use of lower extremity prosthetics or;
 - c. Study the effects of aging of the body in relationship to the functional use of the prostheses over the lifetime of the amputee or;
 - d. Assess the effectiveness, advantages/disadvantages of different harnessing systems and materials for the upper limb prostheses or;

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- e. Evaluate functionality of body powered versus microelectric upper body prostheses or;
 - f. Study the effect of deteriorating joints due to increased strain of using lower and upper body prostheses or;
 - g. Perform gait analysis related to performance of recently developed lower extremity prosthetics.
- 4.** This solicitation is open-ended with regards to prostheses to be studied. However, those using computer componentry have been identified by both the VA Prosthetics and Sensory Aids Service Strategic Healthcare Group and the Rehabilitation Research and Development Service as having particular potential to better serve the veteran population.
- 5.** Studies should be rigorously designed. They must involve veteran subjects and compare and contrast currently prescribed limbs against newer limbs coming to market. Final analysis should contribute to guidelines for prescription criteria.
- 6.** All research must be done in a VA facility. Principal Investigators must have at least a 5/8ths VA appointment.

7. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION:

a. Letters of Intent and Proposals should be written in compliance with Rehabilitation Research and Development Guidelines for Researchers found on our web site at www.vard.org.

b. Letters of Intent and Proposals should be mailed to:

Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Department of Veterans Affairs (122P)
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Federal Express packages should be sent to:
Rehabilitation Research and Development Service
Department of Veterans Affairs (122P)
1400 "I" Street, NW; Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
202-408-3670

c. Letters of Intent are due June 27, 2001 with proposals due on August 29, 2001.

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8. REVIEW: Proposals received in response to this announcement will undergo scientific review in October 2001. Proposals receiving the most meritorious scores are expected to begin funding January 1, 2002.

9. INQUIRIES: For further information about this solicitation, contact Laura Bowman, Assistant Director, Rehabilitation Research and Development Service at 202-408-3680 or e-mail bowlau@mail.va.gov.

John R. Feussner, MD, MPH
Chief Research and Development Officer

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